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Solons Strive to Save Sandinista Regime

Former Senator Frank Church, former National Security Council staffer Robert Pastor, and Washington *Post* foreign editor Karen De Young were among those who participated in a forum two weeks ago called by opponents of American aid to the freedom fighters now trying to overthrow Nicaragua's corrupt Marxist regime.

Twelve members of Congress, including Rep. Michael Barnes (D.-Md.), chairman of the House subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs, signed a "Dear Colleague" letter advising members of Congress and their staffs to attend the far left event.

Barnes told his colleagues that the forum was sponsored by a group called the Campaign for Political Rights, in cooperation with organizations such as the Americans for Democratic Action and the American Civil Liberties Union.

He neglected to tell them that the Campaign for Political Rights has been operating on the far left side of the political spectrum for several years.

In years past, it was run by a steering committee that included the Black Panther party, the anti-CIA publications *CounterSpy* and *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, the National Lawyers Guild, the Puerto Rican Socialist party, and the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, a Communist front organization.

Rep. Barnes also failed to tell his colleagues that Judith Clark, a member of the May 19th Communist Organization, had attended meetings of the Campaign for Political Rights in Washington before she was arrested with members of the Weatherman terrorist gang after the murder-robbery in Nyack, New York, last October. This fact was revealed not by some "right-wing scandal sheet," but by Jeff Stein, a former fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies, in a column he wrote for the left-wing newspaper, *1981*, last year. Stein expressed the fear that "some in the government"

would use the "association" with Clark to "smear" the Campaign for Political Rights, which he claimed was doing nothing illegal.

The forum, entitled, "U.S. Covert Operations Against Nicaragua," was held on May 27 in the Dirksen Senate Office Building. But the nature of these alleged operations was never fully explained.

The news reports of such plots began on March 10 when Washington *Post* reporters Patrick Tyler and Bob Woodward wrote that President Reagan had approved a \$19 million plan to create a paramilitary force to operate against the Sandinistas. The next day, however, Philip Taubman of the New York *Times* reported that the paramilitary plan had been rejected, and that the Administration was simply going to funnel millions of dollars to "moderate elements" opposing the Sandinistas. A few days later, also in the New York *Times*, Leslie Gelb claimed that the money was actually going to "progressive and left-of-center groups and individuals" in Nicaragua.

Presidential Counselor Ed Meese quickly denounced those reports, saying their publication either compromises secret operations or gives the enemy a great opportunity for propaganda.

Nevertheless, there is no denying that armed actions against the Sandinista regime have become better organized over the last several months. Jose Cardenal, the political coordinator of the Fuerza Democratica Nicaraguense (FDN), one of the anti-government guerrilla groups, recently told HUMAN EVENTS that more than 3,000 opponents of the Sandinistas are now under arms, and that more are being trained. He said that during the month of April alone, they staged six major attacks on government buildings and military installations, killing about one hundred Sandinista soldiers. Cardenal, a one-time ally of the Sandinistas who fled the country when he realized they were hard-core Marxist-Leninists, believes that the regime can be overthrown with the support of the U.S. and other countries.

But Rep. Barnes wants to make sure that never happens. He has introduced legislation to prohibit U.S. support for military or paramilitary operations in Nicaragua. There are 42 co-sponsors of the legislation, including Rep. Silvio Conte (R.-Mass.), the ranking Republican on the powerful House Appropriations Committee.

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In the "Dear Colleague" letter promoting the forum on Nicaragua, Barnes claimed that any plan to "destabilize" the Sandinistan regime "would have a profound negative impact on the credibility of the United States among non-repressive governments in this hemisphere." He added, "This would be a matter of deep concern to all who hope for stability and peace in Central America."



BARNES

Of course, Barnes ignores the fact that Nicaragua is a repressive, Marxist-Leninist government, and that by exporting subversion and terrorism it has threatened the stability and peace of the region.

Former Senator Frank Church, who was introduced by Sen. Claiborne Pell (D.-R.I.), was guilty of the same sort of doubletalk in his speech to the forum. He left no doubt that he opposed covert action, whether it be in Chile, Guatemala or Nicaragua. He described it as "a semantic disguise for murder, coercion, blackmail, bribery, the spreading of lies, whatever is deemed useful in bending other countries to our will."

Nevertheless, Church acknowledged that there could be cases "where a president might find a covert action advantageous in the furtherance of traditional American principles." He said, "If, for

example, a country had emerged from a long and brutal siege or dictatorship and elections were scheduled in which the democratic parties were paired off against the local Communists; and if, in this case, the Russians were secretly subsidizing the Communists in a campaign where the restoration of free government hung in the balance, I would think it sensible to discreetly assist the partisans of democracy. Later, if our hand were exposed, we could rightly say, 'Yes, we were there and proud of it.' "

But Church failed to recognize that Nicaragua today fits that mold perfectly, except for the fact that the Sandinistas have done away with free elections, have declared themselves Marxist-Leninist, are clearly exporting subversion and are *openly* receiving assistance from the Russians.

If one uses the logic of Church, who must still be numb from the drubbing he took at the polls in 1980, it is fully consistent with traditional American principles to support the Nicaraguan opposition, politically, financially and militarily. Church didn't recognize the logic of his own position.

Needless to say, the Campaign for Political Rights crowd isn't interested in logic or, for that matter, traditional American principles. The company they keep indicates that they support the Marxist-Leninist Sandinistas and what they stand for. It's shocking that members of the Congress, and a current and former U.S. Senator, would lend their names or presence to a forum sponsored by such a group.

- Those members of Congress who signed the letter promoting the Campaign for Political Rights forum on Nicaragua, in addition to Rep. Barnes, were: Matthew McHugh (D.-N.Y.), Jonathan Bingham, (D.-N.Y.), Bob Edgar (D.-Pa.), Tom Harkin (D.-Iowa), James Oberstar (D.-Minn.), Ron Dellums (D.-Calif.), Don Edwards (D.-Calif.), Ted Weiss (D.-N.Y.), Parren Mitchell (D.-Md.), John Conyers (D.-Mich.) and Shirley Chisholm (D.-N.Y.).

- At one point in the forum, a so-called documentary film, "Americas in Transition," was shown. Narrated by left-wing activist and actor Ed Asner, the film was an indictment of U.S. "intervention" in Latin America and whitewashed or ignored Marxist subversion and terrorism.

Interestingly, the film was aired nationally by the Public Broadcasting Service one day before the forum, on May 26. It was financed by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to the tune of \$30,000, courtesy of the U.S. taxpayer.